

276 *kava* is a mild diuretic. Villagers have plenty of opportunity
751 to notice this effect of *kava* even if they are unclear as to any
precise cause and effect relationship between this effect and
(514) alleged better health. One reason incidentally, that the
villager gives for the rule that the *kava*-making girl should
not herself drink is that it would be unseemly for her in the
eyes of the men to leave the house frequently to urinate.

276 The topics that are discussed in the ordinary *kava*-circle
574 are endless in their repetitive rehashing. The state of the
521 cultivations, the gossip and scandal of the village, the strange
ways of white people, news and rumour from other villages
far and near, actions of government representatives from
policemen to high officials, chance remarks heard from
passing acquaintances on the island roads, religious doctrine
and dogma, dreams and strange events—all these and many
other topics are considered from every possible angle and
(888) point of view. The older men carry on the discussion while
the younger sit quietly and listen. Sometimes the discussion
will be spirited with many taking part. At other times it
will die down to muttered conversations between one or two
men with others dozing or preoccupied with their own
thoughts or busily rolling banana leaf cigarettes from the
strong and pungent Tongan tobacco. A pause in conversa-
tion comes while a fresh round of *kava* is being made. Then
discussion gathers new strength. And so it goes for hours
on end, sinking and rising according to the spirits of the
participants and the lateness of the hour. Younger men of
the village obtain from these *kava*-discussions the elements
of a liberal education both in the arts and in the crafts of
village life. Sometimes the group will spend part of an
(533) evening singing. The songs may be either church-hymns or
ancient chants.

276 *Kava* is a mild narcotic. Excessive drinking often
1933 leads to what can well be termed mild cases of drug-
addiction. Seven men and one woman are considered in the
village to be extremely heavy drinkers whose continual
desire for *kava* is in the nature of an obsession. Other men
drink heavily at odd times, but not continuously. The results
of addiction, according to informants, are personal laziness,
physical weakness and domestic trouble. Night after night
spent drinking *kava* is likely to leave the addict lazy and

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sleepy during the day. Instead of working in his garden, the addict spends his daylight hours asleep. Poverty and a lack of food are characteristic of his household. Those who are recognized as the hardest workers in the village are conspicuously those who rarely drink *kava* in the evenings or who are content with two or three rounds only of *kava* before going to sleep.

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Domestic trouble arises because the drinker generally deserts his household to drink elsewhere. This is illustrated by the case of the heaviest drinker in the village. He drinks *kava* several times daily. His own house is small and unsuitable for *kava*-parties. It is also very close to the bush that encircles the village and close therefore to the numerous and malevolent evil spirits (*tevolo*) that haunt the bush after nightfall. This makes the house a dangerous place in which to leave a wife and small children without adult male protection. Hence the addict's wife is continually angry because of this desertion. There have been frequent domestic brawls and the wife has occasionally deserted her husband. Moreover, this addict rarely works in his gardens. He leaves gardening to his aged father who is recognized as definitely "queer" by the villagers (the father shuns company, is given to long solitary walks, talks softly to himself: the very antithesis of the sociability-loving Tongan). Much of the money the addict obtains from his school-teaching he spends buying *kava*-root at the store. Thus the household is poor in every respect.

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This addict is an extreme case of *kava*-craving. Village opinion does not of course consider the fact that he may have become an addict because of certain personality difficulties which have of themselves made his domestic life unsatisfactory. This would be a somewhat sophisticated view for the villager to try to comprehend. Hence he simply takes it for granted that excessive *kava*-drinking is the cause of all troubles. His conviction is perhaps rendered more certain by noticing the results when some of the more daring young men have emptied a bottle of whisky into a full *kava* bowl and then swallowed the resulting concoction. (There are very stringent, enforced laws against drinking the white man's liquor or beer—only very occasionally could this happen.)